

STATE SENATOR • RAYMOND E. BASHAM • 8TH DISTRICT

Basham Press Release

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For Immediate Release
Sen. Ray Basham

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Basham's Invasive Species Bill Signed into Law

LANSING—State Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) thanked Governor Jennifer Granholm today for signing into law his legislation dealing with the invasive species threat. Senate Bill 507, now Public Act 81 of 2005, would revise the sentencing guidelines in the Code of Criminal Procedure to include the possession or release of any genetically engineered, nonnative, or prohibited organism. It is part of a bipartisan package of bills designed to prevent the introduction and spread of nonnative species.

“I’m pleased that Governor Granholm agrees that existing state law does not do enough to prepare us for the next invasion of nonnative species,” said Sen. Basham. “Only by acting proactively can we get ahead of a problem that seriously threatens our economy and quality of life.”

While many nonnative species are unable to survive under the conditions of their new environment, some experience dramatic proliferation in the absence of the natural competitors, predators, and diseases that normally would keep their population growth in check. This unchecked spread can threaten the survival and diversity of native species, change natural habitats, jeopardize public health, damage property, and discourage tourism.

“At the current rate, a new species is introduced to the Great Lakes every eight months, said Senator Basham. “This makes it impossible for ecosystems to recover and stabilize from each new invasion.”

According to the National Wildlife Foundation, invasive species cause at least \$137 billion each year in economic losses. There are now over 180 nonnative species of plants and animals in the Great Lakes. With Michigan’s economy heavily reliant on agriculture and tourism, it is particularly vulnerable to the destructive impact of nuisance species.

“The zebra mussel alone constitutes a \$5 billion annual loss to Michigan’s economy and the Emerald Ash Borer has destroyed more than 15 million ash trees in the state since 2002,” said Senator Basham. “We simply had to take action to limit our exposure to these extremely damaging and costly environmental threats.”

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